

# INTERNATIONAL

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# REVIEW

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*The World's Most Significant Thought and Action*



# CRIMES IN RUSSIA— INTRIGUE IN SPAIN

• Victor Serge

From "Révolution Proletarienne," Paris

## I

WITH EACH resounding new crime committed by the gangs ruling the totalitarian States, the human feeling of our time falls a little lower and the crime that follows is rendered easier. Sixteen are shot in Moscow. What chance is there to save Edgar Andre's life? The axe of the Nazi executioner swoops down. What is the worth now of the lives of the surviving October combatants inside the Stalinist prisons?

At the end of November, at the very moment when the *Cahiers des Droits de l'Homme* in Paris published the strange report by Mr. Rosenmark who finds that the assassination of Lenin's companions had been perpetrated under sufficiently legal forms, there took place the horrifying Novosibirsk trial, at which the untruth of the confessions was displayed with such impudence that the reader of the newspaper rubbed his eyes unbelievably. This crime is full of such cynicism; we must go back far in history to find its like. Nine poor devils, one of them a German, engineers and technicians at a mine where occurred a catastrophe costing the lives of 14 workers (Serge errs in one detail; we learn that Stickling was not employed at the mine in question but was thrown into the bargain because there was the need of a German "spy" in the case), appear before the court and sign to the most unbelievable confessions. The German Stickling confesses to be an agent of the Gestapo. The engineers declare that they have provoked the catastrophe under the instruction of Trotskyites in order to annoy "our great People's Commissar Ordjonikidze" and prepare the victory of fascism in the U.S.S.R. This is at the same time infamous and idiotic. In the course of the discussion, one of the accused declared that he was present in 1927—in nineteen twenty-seven—at a meeting where Trotsky sealed his alliance with the Nazis. Reading this, I asked myself if I saw right. Naturally, there was not a single Trotskyite among the accused. There were only some poor tortured, terrorized, helpless individuals who have lost all shame and all reason, caught between the certainty of being shot if they resisted and the feeble hope of escaping death at any price.

Occasionally there is heard from behind the stage the name of Muralov, a left oppositional communist after 1927—a real one this time—who took Moscow in February in 1917 and took it again in October 1917, an intrepid soldier of two revolutions. He is lost now. Piatakov, a capitulator of capitulators, who left us in 1928 to become a devout servant of Stalinism—he too is lost, unbelievable though it reads. I have asked friends of mine who knew him well why Piatakov went, and we found only two explanations: "No witnesses," and "Piatakov used to drink." He must have said, imprudently, something he, in spite of everything, carried on his chest.

The nine accused were quite naturally sentenced to die. The German was pardoned and thus saved the lives of two Russians. There were only six executions.

More trials are being prepared.

Something else is being prepared.

## II

Let us disclose the sore. Why keep silent? . . . Here are the facts. There is in Spain a large worker party of Communist oppositionists, that is, a party that takes an open hostile stand against the Stalinist conception of the totalitarian State and the bureaucratic system. It is the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, the P.O.U.M.

One of its founders, Joaquín Maurin, was shot by the rebels. The chief of its first motorized column, Echebehere, a real proletarian hero, was killed at Madrid some weeks ago. . . . There were also Germinal Vidal, José Oliver, Pedro Villarosa. The dead of this party are many.

At the time of the formation of the defense junta of Madrid, the only committee that remained in Madrid was the committee of the P.O.U.M. And though the influence of this party is at least equal to the Stalinist party, it found itself excluded from the defense junta. The socialist, syndicalist and anarchist militants wanted to collaborate with the P.O.U.M. and said so to our friends Andrade and Gorkin. The anarchist minister Juan López (C. N. T.) had an interview on this subject with the P.O.U.M. delegates, which was published in the Valencia press.

We learn from this interview that it was at the pressure and ultimatum of the Stalinist party and of the U.S.S.R. legation at Madrid that the P.O.U.M. was excluded from the defense junta. The *Batalla* of the 27th of November, commenting on this unheard of thing, writes (surely with great moderation):

"It is intolerable that for the price of a little aid, certain people try to impose on us predetermined political limitations, pronounce vetoes, and claim the privilege of guiding Spanish political life."

We have here an explanation of other aggressions committed against Spanish revolutionaries. The pogrom perpetrated on the offices of Communist Youth of Madrid by a Stalinist band (during the siege) and the banning of the organ of the P.O.U.M. from Madrid, the first attack on the liberty of opinion in the revolutionary democracy.

The *Batalla* adds that "the Soviet consulate of Barcelona directs a campaign of insults and calumny against us."

A campaign of threats also. The Stalinists of Spain already permit themselves to speak of "showing their iron hand" (sic). We shall see. Let us however take note of the style and tone.

On the 28th of November, the Soviet consulate at Barcelona communicated to the press a malicious note accusing officially the P.O.U.M. press of "being sold to international fascism." The organ of the Stalinist party of Barcelona (the P.S.U.C.) *Treball* denounced categorically the comrades of the P.O.U.M. as the "agents of Franco-Hitler-Mussolini" and adds daily that they are, moreover, Trotskyists, and consequently agents of the Gestapo, "as has been proved at the Moscow trial." Notice how all this infamy is related and how far it travels.

It is in order to strangle more efficiently the revolutionaries of Spain that the old revolutionaries of Russia were assassinated.

It goes without saying that the Soviet influence over the petty-bourgeois press of Catalonia is quite real. Many of their politicians wish to be able to rid themselves one day of the most intransigent revolutionary proletarians. The *Humanidad* takes up this calumny.

The *Batalla* replied on the 29th, in an extremely moderate note, reminding of its dead, its loyalty to the communism of the heroic years and its defence of the U.S.S.R. at a time when most of its praisers of today were maligning it.



Then there took place a curious and quite secret act, which seemed especially curious because the P.O.U.M. participated in the government of the Generalita of Catalonia, in which my old comrade Nin took charge of the Ministry of Justice. The censorship intervened to stop the publication of the P.O.U.M. note by other newspapers.

At the same time came the information that dark intrigues were plotted to eliminate the P.O.U.M. from the government of the Generalita.

If the Stalinists were successful (the comrades of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. must have permitted themselves to be tricked—and they will pay for it dearly in time), the following stages of the operations could be foreseen: the Soviet consulate will try to obtain the prohibition of the *Batalla*, that is impose the gag on the Catalanian labor movement, and in order to get a hold on the movement, they will finish up by staging against the Spanish revolutionaries, in imitation of the court comedies of Moscow and Novosibirsk, "plots with Hitler-Franco-Mussolini."

By maligning their political opponents as "agents of international fascism," before a people that often does not know what it is all about because it is too busy fighting for its life and its homes—the official representatives of the U.S.S.R. and the Stalinists in Spain are committing a crime against a common cause and are preparing other crimes. This kind of calumny is a poisoned weapon that cannot be used with impunity. In the entrenched camp of the Spanish revolution, the agents of fascism should be shot, or at least rendered powerless to do any harm. The revolutionaries at whom these people attempt to throw mud in the face and who feel that a trap is being prepared for them, should not hesitate to show up their calumniators. The comrades of the P.O.U.M. have given enough proof of strength and coolness to deserve our confidence. Let international labor opinion support them in all vigilance.

(Our readers know that Nin has been pushed out of the Catalanian Ministry of Justice. We hope to receive a communication from Roberto in time for publication in the February issue.)

## A LETTER TO THE WORLD

• Leon Trotsky

### FOREWORD

AT THE TIME when this letter was being prepared for publication in the *International Review*, we learned that Trotsky and his wife had been forcibly taken aboard the tanker "Ruth" and shipped off to Mexico. A little later came the interesting information that the quotations in London conceded only three chances to five Trotsky would survive the first month in Mexico. Trotsky is being dragged off to Mexico because the government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (Russia) threatened, and actually started to carry out, an economic blockade against little Norway. In this manner, it was thought, the Labor government of Norway would get wise to itself and stop fussing over such non-totalitarian ideals as the right of political asylum, the right of defence against accusations by the police, etc. The Norwegian Labor government must have acted sensibly when it chose to give in to the Soviet ultimatum rather than to throw Norwegian workers out of jobs. Indeed, the argument about resulting unemployment was actually presented to the public by Norwegian Communists. Indeed, an ultimatum like the one given by the powerful Soviet government to the nervous little Laborites clerking in the government offices of Norway is more eloquent and more convincing than the argument of the biggest navy guns.

The small possibility that Trotsky will live long after his landing in Mexico lends special significance to one of the last letters he was permitted to write before he was crated for shipment from Hoenfoss, Norway.

The Soviet Union—its domestic and international fortunes—is a subject of focal importance to the labor movement of the world. The Soviet Union has been described as the Svengali that has hypnotized the world labor movement. Soviet communism, I am using the contradictory vulgar term for Bolshevism, which is, of course, essentially antagonistic to the rule of the popularly representative bodies called in Russia "soviets" and has little to do with the term "communism" used in the 19th century by Marx, Engels, Weitling and other members of the Communist League, has been described as a malignant tumor gnawing at the labor movement of the world. It is true that we cannot approach any phase of the labor movement without touching the

subject of the Soviet Union and its subsidiary, the Communist International. At a time when historic development began to show that the utopian pretensions of early Soviet communism only led to the strengthening of the status quo of capitalism and encouraged reaction, Trotsky entered the field as an independent, intransigent missionary of "genuine and purified Leninism." In one scintillating pamphlet after another, he confuted the "Kantian sociologists" and "infantile thinkers" who dared to suspect that the Soviet government was not a dictatorship of the proletariat and that the transformation that occurred in Russia in 1917-1918 was only a progressive revolution, which, because of the historical backwardness of Russia, was but a "moment in the process of the bourgeois revolution itself." In the following letter, Trotsky seems to come close to the position of the stubborn "Kantian sociologists" and "infantile thinkers" he disproved so brilliantly in his pamphlets.

No doubt, "the victory of Stalin is a social fact." It is not to be explained on grounds of personality. It signifies "the victory of a new dominant caste (!) over the proletariat." Indeed, "profound economic reasons in the U.S.S.R." were decisive in making the victory of Stalin, who is "only the peak of a new dominant caste." How dissimilar all this appears to the rules laid down by Trotsky in his *Soviet Union and the Fourth International*!

Will he also discover—if he is permitted to live long enough to continue working on his biography of Lenin—that Stalin is historically the son of Lenin. "The end justifies the means." Trotsky should have learned by now that the choice of means affects, alters, the end.

It is clear from the letter found below that Trotsky has changed his opinion on the question of the class nature of the Soviet State. Only political expediency must keep him from discarding entirely the old formulae and saying plainly that the Russian workers are exploited, under the direction of the Soviet State, in the benefit of the managerial and "responsible" elements in the country, in benefit of the *private* (there are never any other) holders of the Soviet bonded indebtedness at home and abroad. Calling the energetic "responsibles," the young wide-awake Farleys who run Russian industry and business, members of the working class, will



be considered funnier a few years hence. But a man like Trotsky must already smile now.

On the other hand, we cannot hope to have him speak plainly on his so-called Bolshevism-Leninism. Why does Trotsky write a biography of Lenin? He writes a biography of Lenin to defend Trotsky against Stalin. The most effective ideological weapon used by the Stalinist apparatus against a menace like Trotsky is the essentially truthful contention that Lenin had profound differences with Trotsky.

We quote from an essay that will shortly appear in this publication:

"Politicians create their gods in their own image. If Stalin's Lenin is a dogmatic, brutal, staunch Stalinist henchman, Trotsky's Lenin is Trotsky at his fiercest, Trotsky most earnest, Trotsky most historically sensitive. Lenin's death marked the close of the internationalist-revolutionary phase of Bolshevism. Already before that time the politics and economics of 'Luxemburgism,' borrowed by the Bolsheviks in 1918, began to be discarded by the post-revolutionary State, the rulers of Soviet Russia blew up the personality of the dead Lenin to the dimension of a major pagan diety and made it a very effective means of social control. In backward countries, religion remains an important instrument of government. But even before Lenin was raised to godhood, the traditional party of the October revolution had constituted itself as a church claiming the righteousness and infallibility that comes with undisputed power. The Russian Bolshevik party-church is headed by its bishop-secretary. Because of the advantageous position of the mother party-church as a holder of State power over a vast country of many millions simple souls (who believe themselves lucky to have their daily bread and to whom an interest in politics looks like a utopia that comes with luxury), the bishop-secretary of the mother church early became the most powerful bishop-secretary or the pope-secretary of all the Bolshevik Communist organizations in the world.

"This church-party has bound up all its righteousness and infallibility with the personality of the deified Lenin. The untutored mind craves to find authority in a person rather than in a principle. It is Lenin who speaks through the Bolshevik pope, who is actually no more than Lenin's vicar on earth. What does Stalin write? He writes *Essentials of Leninism, Fundamentals of Leninism, Questions of Leninism, Principles of Leninism*, etc. Stalin is Lenin's mouthpiece (and, we might add, his false teeth). 'I hear Stalin—and see Lenin!' chirps Adalis the successful Soviet poetess. 'Stalin is right because Lenin was right,' comments a deep Soviet thinker whose name escapes me at this moment.

"In Russia, as well as in the Communist Parties outside of Russia, all one has to do in order to overwhelm opposition is to call it Trotskyist. Why? Because the party-church has succeeded in publicizing to its vast flock all over the surface of the globe that Trotsky is anti-Leninist, which he no doubt was and is.

"In spite of his talk about the formation of new parties and a new International, Trotsky's chief task therefore remains that of 'reforming' his comrades of 1917-1923, who had slid back to the Bolshevik pre-War program. In order to withstand the devastating, though superficial, condemnation of his general position as anti-Bolshevik and anti-Leninist, Trotsky proclaims himself to be the genuine Bolshevik-Leninist. And just as Stalin has found it important to prove that Lenin was the prototype, the demiurgos, of Stalinism, so must Trotsky do his best to prove that Lenin was one with Trotsky. All in all, Trotsky's use of the term 'Bolshevism-Leninism' as opposed to Stalin's 'Bolshevism' and 'Leninism' is merely another aid to the confusion that is harrying the labor movement at present and will harry it for years to come."

Though he is a breeder of confusion, Trotsky is a great, brave, earnest man. He is guilty of a number of dirty acts of disservice to the propertyless of the earth, as the shooting up of the Kronstadt sailors, who merely wanted a little more bread and a little more freedom (through the rule of the popular Soviets) for the masses of Russia. And he was not always an intransigent opponent of the chauvinism and opportunism he sees in Stalin. But it is true that the opportunism typical of the politician does not cling to Trotsky for very long. He is quite inept as a politician.

We hope he arrives safely in Mexico and that he attains there relative longevity! That is, we earnestly wish that the wise bettors in London are proved to be suckers. Our advice to Trotsky, however, is to avoid the plateau; its altitude is too great for folks with high blood pressure. Especially should he avoid the suburb of Coyocan. We advise him not to stray outside his home without a fast-shooting bodyguard. For there is no God like Lenin and no true-believers more fanatical than Leninist-Stalinists. True, they do not practise individual terrorism, but the fury of a mob is often deadly, though it may not be classified as individual terror. In Mexico, the possession of revolvers is uncontrolled by the State. The C.T.M., the Mexican Federation of Labor, which was organized under government control, with C. P. intellectuals serving as the labor lieutenants of capital, runs fifteen-minute strikes. But its bawling picket line under Trotsky's window will not cease day and night, till the anti-C.P. wing within the Grand Revolutionary Party, the State party of Mexico, agrees to deport Trotsky as a public nuisance, or till some provocation results in Trotsky's death. It is laughable, but true, that in Mexico only the anti-radical elements will stand up in defence of Trotsky. All the radicals, excepting the handful around Rivera, will refuse to have anything to do with the great Russian Revolutionary. However, the most recent "old man" is a gigantic personality; he can influence people. That is what the new labor fakers of Mexico, Lombardo Toledano and his merry gang of "labor" professors and lawyers, now enjoying a parasitic existence in the Mexican labor movement, are especially afraid of. Trotsky is not Morones.

Dear Friends:

Hoenfoss, Norway.

I was already rejoicing to be able to continue in all tranquillity my biography of Lenin. Now I must again pay attention to utterly repugnant calumny and to lying accusations. But nothing can be done about it. Old Wilhelm Liebknecht used to say: "You need a thick skin in politics." It is quite natural to ask why Stalin has staged the miserable play that is causing so much harm to the labor movement. He has done it for several reasons, which are to a certain extent contradictory.

1. He tried to utilize the assassination of Kirov in order to kill the opposition politically. But that was not as easy as he thought. The tale about the Lettish consul was a fiasco; and no serious and honest person believed that Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others had anything to do with the assassination of Kirov. People—even in the Soviet Union—whispered it was all an infamous machination of the G.P.U. In order to back up the first trial, Stalin had to start a new one that was better prepared.

2. The Comintern exists, and in spite of its turn to opportunism and chauvinism, it is held responsible, by bourgeois public opinion, for any revolutionary movement. The IVth International was often spoken off as an affiliate of the IIIrd. Stalin has done his utmost—you recall his interview with Laval—to demonstrate that the Comintern is no longer a revolutionary instrument. But he was not taken so easily at his word. In order to strengthen his credit with the French bourgeoisie, he judged it useful to proceed with bloody measures against the left opposition.



3. Neither could he renounce the Comintern. The so-called "trotskyism", that is the development and the continuation of the ideas of Marx and Lenin, spreads more and more, even in the ranks of the Comintern. Important signs of this tendency are to be noticed in France, Czechoslovakia and in other countries. That is why it is a question of life or death for Stalin, for his political authority among the workers, to "annihilate trotskyism." By arguments? No, that is not in Stalin's line. He has, however, an apparatus that offers him the possibility of staging fake trials . . . This way, the accusation is expected to strengthen, *at the same time*, his authority with his bourgeois allies as well as among revolutionary workers.

This contradictory game is an index of the internal inconsistency of the policies pursued by Stalinism in its dual role as a dominant national caste, on one hand, and as an international labor organization (the Comintern), on the other.

If we pass from the political side to the personal side, we find still another motive: that of the sentiment of vengeance, which is quite pronounced in Stalin. In the year of 1924, Stalin, Djerzinski and Kamenev were seated, one summer evening, over a bottle of wine (I do not know if it was the first), chatting about things in general. In the course of the conversation, there came up the idle question as to what each would like best in life. I do not remember what Djerzinski and Kamenev happened to say. But according to Kamenev, who told me the story, Stalin said: "There is nothing sweeter in life than to choose your enemy, prepare well your blow, revenge yourself on him without pity, and then go home for a good night's sleep."

You recall that in 1921 Lenin strongly counselled the party not to elect Stalin as secretary-general. "That cook will prepare us only spicy dishes," Lenin said. But at that time Lenin could not have had the slightest idea how spicy this cook's dishes would become.

You have certainly not forgotten that Lenin in his "testament" advised the party to remove Stalin from his position as secretary-general because of his coarseness and lack of loyalty. This characterization, as it is found in the official letter, does not bring out fully Lenin's thought. In Autumn 1926, Krupskaja told me, in the presence of Zinoviev and Kamenev: "Volodia (that is what she used to call Vladimir Lenin) said of Stalin: 'He lacks the most elementary honesty.'" And she repeated: "Do you understand? The most elementary honesty!" I have never published these words, as I did not want to have any harm come to Krupskaja. But now that she has been definitely carried away by the official current and does not offer the slightest protest against the infamous crime of the directing clique, I believe I have the right to publish Lenin's words.

The accused, who at the same time played the role of State's witnesses, justified the supposed terrorist intentions against Stalin by the allegation that in the Soviet Union everything is suspended from him. This conception fits the bureaucracy as well as terrorist adventurers. The all-powerful bureaucrat thinks: "I am everything." The terrorist says to himself, referring to the all-powerful bureaucrat: "He is everything." I repeat: "The terrorist is only the red shadow of bureaucratic absolutism." As for myself, I am far from believing that Stalin is everything. On this point I believe I have said enough before. The victory of Stalin over the opposition is a *social* fact, not a personal fact. It signifies the victory of a new dominant caste over the proletariat. Profound economic reasons in the U.S.S.R. and profound political reasons in Western Europe were decisive in making this victory. Stalin is only the peak of a new dominant caste. In his

brutal, ignorant mediocrity, he expresses best the principal characteristics of the new dominant layer of the bureaucrat *parvenus*.

It would be pitifully stupid to believe that with a revolver and a bomb one could stop or avoid the great social and political reaction in the Soviet Union. Only the world proletariat can show to the Russian people the way out. If the Spanish revolution wins, if the French proletariat really comes to power, if a new wind blows across Europe, then the Russian proletariat too will begin to move and again become conscious of its great tradition. Then the bureaucratic heroes who imagine themselves to be the navel of the world, will find themselves on the garbage heap of history.

If the gentlemen in the Kremlin wish to accuse me of serving with my writings the future victory of the Soviet people over the reactionary bureaucracy, I answer: "Yes, I am guilty!"

Leon Trotsky

## HITLER'S TERROR MACHINE

From "Neue Front," Paris

THE SCHUTZSTAFFEL of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (SS) came into being after the putsch of November 1923 in the capacity of a defence guard of Hitler and the higher leaders. It assumed an important role only after Hitler's seizure of power. At the Party Day of 1928 there was a representation of only several hundred members of the SS. At the last Party Day there were 2,000.

The SS is the militia of National Socialism. Just as Roehm had the ambition to make his S.A. (storm troopers) the core of a new Nazi *Reichswehr*, so Himmler wanted to make his Schutzstaffel the military and ideological vanguard of the Third Reich. At the order of the Reichswehr and with its aid, Roehm's attempts came to naught on June 30, 1934. Similarly Himmler, too, was forced to limit his military ambition. The Schutzstaffel did not get the honors and advancement that it looked forward to after the St. Bartholemew's Night of June 1934. On the contrary, it found itself practically disarmed, with the exception of small formations as the "Bodyguard" standards, the SS orderly troops, the "Death's-Head" alliance, etc. The "Bodyguard" standards and the orderly troops are a fine military corps; they attain in every way the level of the Reichswehr, being trained and led by Reichswehr officers and subjected to the high command of the Reichswehr. The "Death's-Head" alliance is composed of the watchdogs of the concentration camps, that is, it is the scum of sadists and professional ruffians who have for years now led a lazy existence varied only by their torture of the imprisoned antifascists.

The armed SS division does not probably count more than 10,000. The great mass of the Schutzstaffel is made of elements that have entered the organization after Hitler's accession to power. Considered from the angle of its social composition, it may be said to be free from proletarian elements. In spite of the great efforts of its leadership, it is even today not entirely dependable either militarily or politically.

The organization of the SS is featured by an elaborate military hierarchy of "leaders", officers and sub-officers. There are innumeral positions for paid functionaries. The SS has its detailed constitution of grades, rules of service, drill regulations and cultural dogma. It is divided into three divisions: the general division of "active troops", the Race and Settlement division and the Security Service division.



The division of "active troops" is the actual battle organization. It is led by Fuehrer Heissmeyer and comprises organizationally the entire SS. It is divided into sections, "standards", *sturmbanne* and *stuerme*. To it are affiliated a number of auxiliary organizations, as the pioneer troops, a medical corps, a motor corps, schools for leaders, radio guards, airfield guards, etc. A smoothly functioning net of communications and the most modern instruments of alarm prepares the SS for the eventuality of an internal armed outbreak. Each main section of the SS has its own radio station, provided with the newest receiving and sending apparatus. (The sending apparatus of the West SS section—its leader is Weitzel, who is also the chief of police of Duesseldorf—costs 80,000 gold marks.) To make possible a personal union of the SS with the higher state functions, and especially to secure the executive power, most SS *fuehrers*, the chiefs of the standards and their superiors, are also the police presidents of the large cities. This articulation reaches into the Reich Ministry of Inner Affairs, in which the State Secretariat of the Police is directed by the Reich SS *fuehrer* Himmler (*Ed.* compare relation of OGPU to Soviet Commissariat of Inner Affairs). The police of the country is made up of *Ordnungs* (order) police, traffic police, municipal police and the *Sicherheit* (Public Safety) police. The *Ordnungs* police is headed by the police general Daluge. The "Public Safety" department (the secret State police—the Gestapo—and the Criminal police) is under the orders of *Obergruppenfuehrer* (chief group leader) Heydrich, who is at the same time also the head of the SD division ("security service") of the SS.

The Race and Settlement Division of the SS, with the Reich Minister of Agricultural *Obergruppenfuehrer* Darre as its head, takes care of the education of the active troops. It has its system of lecturers for main sections of the troops and subordinate educational directors and teachers, who see to the ideological and political education of the troops. The latter is made up of Guenther's nonsense about races and Rosenberg's historical, political and religious teachings. Through the Race and Settlement Division the SS has become the particular exponent of the ideological and religious fight carried on in the name of Hitlerite fascism. In its publication *Das schwarze Korps* (the Black Corps) it leads a radical struggle against Christianity and especially against the Catholic Church. (It has a circulation of 300,000). It is anti-Semitic on a slightly higher level than the *Stuermer* and has become the refuge of certain anti-capitalist tendencies of the Nazi movement. This part of the original Hitler program has of late become rather inconvenient to the Nazi leadership. Darré's aim to make the SS the ideological shock troops of the National Socialist Workers' Party appear to have been thwarted. In view of the political situation at home and abroad, Hitlerite fascism is hardly interested in having these ideological details of its make-up come to the fore.

Furthermore, politically Darré seems to have come to the end of the rope. One of the striking features of the Nuernberg Party Day was that the "Leader of the German Peasants" was hardly in evidence. On the other hand, Himmler's division played an important part on the occasion, guarding the Nazi leadership from getting too near the enthusiasm of the masses.

But the fact is that the task of "Domestic Safety" has undoubtedly passed from the keeping of the purely Nazi organizations to the police and army. To a certain extent, the Nazi organizations have become superfluous—the forsaken SA (*Sturm abteilung*, the common storm troopers) even more than the SS. Both organizations can still give some service as instruments of the Nazi-

terror apparatus. In that regard, the "Security Service" Division (the S.D.) of the SS plays qualitatively the biggest role.

The Gestapo is practically identical with the S.D. Division. The officials of the Gestapo, the provincial and district magistrates as well as the members of the provincial and district government councils are without exception members of the SS and have the rank of at least *untersturmfuehrer*, sub-storm-leaders. The executive positions in the Gestapo offices and the department of crime prosecution and the criminal courts are all occupied by members of the S.D. Division. This penetration of the Nazi Ochrana (OGPU) with S.D. representatives is spreading even now. For in this sphere original Hitlerite fascism remains unchanged. The secret State police has sucked into itself an army of party comrades, professional police-aids who like to play the role of brass-knuckle heroes. The former professional police officials were not quite fit to torture political prisoners. The human scum made up of "old fighters" of the Nazi Party has taken the jobs of torturers and has at the same time procured itself the remuneration and the pensions of State employees.

The rest of the SS is unarmed. It is the rare SS man who has the permission to keep a pistol in his private possession. The formations keep a limited number of arms in their arsenals (and these are mostly small caliber rifles, sub-machine guns and hand grenades.) The incessant to and fro in the drill yards and the singing of party songs have not strengthened to date the spirit of the Nazi militia. There are in evidence signs of a general depressed mood among the SS, but oppositional tendencies calling for a more aggressive party policy are summarily suppressed. The leaders of such movements are discharged and "liquidated for always."

The present condition of this pretorian guard is that of a militia that has for all practical purposes been "put on ice." As was indicated above, the SS remains active only in the Department of Public Safety and in the Secret State Police, where it serves as an instrument of the terror apparatus.

Translated by John Haddon

In the next issue: *The Organization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the OGPU.*

### LONG, LONG AGO

In all Europe it is the reformists, the yellow and pink socialists who are the principal prop of the bourgeoisie.

It is not for nothing that the bourgeoisie looks everywhere for "socialist" ministers, and it is not for nothing that the Italian bourgeoisie is ready to take on as ministers Messrs. Modigliani, Digoni and their kind.

Proletarian discipline is not possible in the party as long as the important places are occupied by the semi-bourgeois elements.

Every word, every act of Turati, Modigliani and the others is a blow against the discipline of our party. The very presence of these people in the midst of our party is by itself a negation of all truly proletarian discipline. The enemy is in your own house. It is impossible to tolerate these convinced and conscious enemies of the proletarian revolution. The Communist International appeals to you, Italian workers, our brothers: rid the party (the Socialist Party of Italy) of the bourgeois element.

The decisive battle approaches.

Signed: Lenin, Zinoviev, Boukharine

The message of the IIIrd International to the Socialist Party of Italy. *La Stampa*, November 7, 1920.



# books

ANDRE GIDE: *RETOUR DE L'URSS.*

(Return from the U.S.S.R.) Gallimard, Paris; 125 pages.

Summarized by EDGAR L. ROOF

Andre Gide's latest book is being summarized below not because we think Gide possesses the understanding and knowledge necessary for a socialist evaluation of the U.S.S.R. and its development. In our preface to Victor Serge's *Open Letter to André Gide*, we wrote: "He (Serge) reports to Gide, the Western intellectual-in-chief, that all is not well with intellect in the land whose liberties Lenin described in his pre-election pamphlet *State and Revolution*. It is interesting to note that Serge, a utopian militant, does not stop to ponder why the revolution he calls socialist did not bring socialism. Neither does he bother to explain the relation of the worker to the product of his labor in the U.S.S.R. These are earthly things. Surely Gide, the refined old literary gentleman, understands best only what is of the spirit."

But there is a gross connection between the spirit and the earth. Followed by lesser Western intellectuals, Gide went sovietic with the depression, and for more than two years served with his keen pen and delicate voice the *Welt politik* of the promotion clique headed by the chief cleric in the Kremlin. Surely Gide did not depend on the Russian State for a living. He was wont to say that for him the cause of humanity seemed to be bound up with the cause of the U.S.S.R. He wondered what Serge meant when he cried he was being defrauded of his Russian Revolution. He wondered why there should be Serges kicking up dust in the Soviet paradise. Gide did not readily swallow the official suggestion that the Serges were in the pay of the enemy.

A few months ago André Gide went to the land of Soviet socialism and found that really all was not well with intellect in Russia. Puzzled, his eyes turned from the tree tops of intellect to lower zones, and he saw that neither was all well down below where people worked for wages. He saw no classes, of course—but rich and poor. He saw that the powerful and well-fixed were arrogant and full of contempt for their inferiors, and the latter showed all the abjectness and the cowed obedience shown by working folk elsewhere. André Gide, who during the last three years had been taught to repeat like a saving charm: "But there are no classes in the U.S.S.R.!", was painfully puzzled.

The *Retour* is essentially a record of the mental squirming of Gide in view of the evident contradiction between Kremlin claims and Soviet reality. Gide repeats the cliché "impressions" that the Soviet bureau of enlightenment provides to distinguished visitors, and then he suffers afterthoughts. Gide does not understand. He keeps on repeating: "I cannot talk about economic questions." ("Technical" questions, he calls them at times.) But his suspicions often come close to fact. We publicize Gide's book because the observations contained in it may shake other "true-believers" into puzzlement, which nearly always preludes understanding.

This summary follows the book in detail. Direct quotations are indicated by page number. There are two brief comments by Mr. Roof, but they are clearly indicated as such.

## Introductory Allusion

GIDE retells the Homeric story of Demeter, the goddess, who wandering in search of her daughter came to the court of Keleos, took the shape of a nurse and tried to induct into godhood the new-born child of Queen Metaneire by

placing him in a brazier full of live coals. The child's mother, inspired with the fear of the ignorant, burst into the room, saved the child, lost the god.

## Foreword

Three years ago Gide expected a renaissance of world culture to result from the development of the U.S.S.R. But already by the time he had left for Russia, the news of certain modifications began to trouble his soul. He said: "We must defend it, no matter what happens." But "if I was mistaken at first, it is best for me to recognize my mistake as soon as possible, for I am responsible for those who are influenced by errors." "Humanity, its destiny, its culture, are more important than the U.S.S.R." (Page 13).

Has he himself changed? There is both good and bad in Russia. The traveller usually sees what he pleases to see. Gide feels we must be especially exacting with those whom we should like to approve of. Even his adverse criticism is influenced by his regard for the prodigious things already accomplished there. Will they who expressed their approval at his telling the truth about the Congo region, now reproach him for daring to tell the truth about the U.S.S.R.? Russia will no doubt overcome its present mistakes, while lies, even the lies of silence, play into the hands of the enemy.

## Chapter I

He was happy whenever he came in contact with the working people of Russia. It seemed to him that they, too, recognized him as a friend. He wants to merit this friendship. Therefore this book.

The tendency was to show him the most successful enterprises, but he himself preferred the sudden, unstaged sights. He recalls with pleasure the happy faces of the children in certain model pioneer camps, the serious interests of the general public in the parks of culture, etc. He does not feel qualified technically to give opinions about factories. He feels a great sympathy for the serious warmth of the Russian people as manifested at the gymnastic games that he saw take place in the Red Square, at Gorki's funeral and at other public events. He admires the beauty of the Caucasus whither he travelled in a special railway car provided to his party by the Union of Soviet Writers. He would have preferred to come as a simple tourist who is merely in love with nature. But he felt drawn especially to the thick forest of social questions, which "in the U.S.S.R. solicit you, press and oppress you from all sides." (Page 33).

## Chapter II

He prefers Leningrad to Moscow, and in the old capital it is old Saint Petersburg that he likes best. The general uniformity is more apparent in Moscow. "It is only after a deliberate examination that differences become visible." (Page 36).

Two or three hundred persons form a patient line in front of a store. He comes back three quarters of an hour later. The line of three hundred is still there. The Russian is more than resigned. He seems to take pleasure in waiting. Gide enters the store. The quality of the goods is poor. He decides that quantity must come before quality can become important. The melons, fruit and vegetables are bad, the wine good, the smoked fish excellent (in Leningrad). The bad quality of the goods may be due to the prevailing State ownership. It will be different in France, where the taste for good things is already prevalent. Too bad, he thinks, that the native popular art of the various republics (Russian) is being fast destroyed and replaced with the stupidly bourgeois, petty bourgeois, factory products that are now put in Moscow show windows.



The extraordinary indolence of the Moscovians. "But stakhanovism has been marvelously invented to shake this laziness (the knout was used formerly)." (Page 43). This natural sloth of the Russians explains for Gide *udarniks*, stakhanovism and the great inequality of wages.

Near Soukhoum he visits a model kolkhoz, called a "millionaire" kolkhoz. Gide is told that there are no shareholders in this kolkhoz, but that its members divide the profits, without paying anything to the State. Gide finds this information "suspicious." He remarks again that he does not understand economic questions, and must leave them to specialists. The homes in the model kolkhoz depress him. Each room has the same bad furniture, the same portrait of Stalin. In some houses there are no individual homes; people sleep, many together, in common large dormitories. He is assured by his guides that the typical kolkhozians have progressed so far socially that they feel an abhorrence for privacy and prefer to live and take their pleasures in crowds.

### Chapter III

Because only one opinion on any subject is allowed in Soviet Russia, the possibilities of happiness must be easy there. Each morning the *Pravda* teaches what is the right thing to know, think and hope for. This shaping of the soul begins in childhood. You talk to one Russian and it is as if you have talked to all.

"The happiness of the Russian worker is built of hope, confidence and ignorance." (Page 50).

Gide says he cannot bring order in his mind on the subject of the happiness of the Soviet population. He avows he is not a technician (economist) and economic questions interest him only for their psychological by-products.

We admire in the U.S.S.R. the great urge toward culture. But the present instruction has as its single aim keeping people satisfied with things as they are and repeating *O U.R.S.S. Ave! Spes unica!* He understands now that the famous "self-criticism" consists almost entirely of denunciations, remonstrances about trifles, as badly swept floors, and general nosing around to see if this or that is "according to the line." "What is discussed here is if such a work, such a gesture, such a theory conforms to the holy line. And woe to him who tries to push it (self-criticism) a little farther." (Page 52).

General ignorance concerning the world outside of the Soviet Union. The Soviet citizen is made to believe that things are much worse abroad. "This illusion is carefully cultivated, for it is important that even dissatisfied persons should congratulate themselves on a régime that preserves them from worse evils." (Page 52). Result: a prevalent superiority complex, of which he gives several examples. "Why speak a foreign language well?" A university student tells him. "In a few years there will be nothing left for us to learn from the United States and Germany." (Page 53). People smile skeptically when he suggests there is a subway also in Paris. An adult asks him if there are any schools in France. An educated worker concedes that there are schools in France but assures the company that children are regularly beaten in French schools. Model girl scholars do not believe that the exhibition of Russian movies is permitted in France. Gide dares to suggest to his company of adults that less is known in Russia about France than in France about Russia. He is quickly reprimanded with the following dictum: "The *Pravda* provides one with all necessary information about everything." (Page 56).

He admires the hotel at Sochi. Fine, he says, if it is for the workers. "But one suffers the more to see that the workers

employed in the construction of the new theatre (at the Sochi resort) are so badly paid and are penned up in their sordid camp." (Page 60).

But much more beautiful and more replete with modern conveniences is Hotel Sinop, near Soukhoum. "Hotel Sinop appears to be one of those places in the world where man finds himself nearest to happiness." Alongside of this paradise is a model sovkhov, established there in order to produce foodstuff for the hotel. He admires in the sovkhov the model stable, the model cow-pen, the model pig-sty and the exceedingly up-to-date poultry yard. The scientific cleanliness, the loving care bestowed on the animals! But "if you cross the stream that delimits the sovkhov, you find a line of shanties, housing the people working in the sovkhov. The workers sleep four in a room two meters and a half long and two meters wide . . . The meal in the sovkhov restaurant costs two roubles, a luxury beyond the means of workers whose wages are seventy roubles a month. They must content themselves with bread and dried fish." (Page 62).

"I do not protest against the inequality of wages; I concede that it was necessary. But there must be means of remedying the differences in living conditions; and I am very much afraid that these differences are growing bigger instead of becoming smaller." (Page 62). He is afraid that a new sort of satisfied, and quite conservative, "worker" bourgeoisie has appeared. It seems to Gide that these bourgeois instincts are being officially encouraged and even praised. He sees the appearance of a new aristocracy—not an aristocracy of merit and personal value but an aristocracy of "conformism", which in "the next generation might become one of money."

Gide is pained at the social condition of the poor. "How can one not help but be shocked by the contempt, or at least the indifference, which those who 'belong,' or at least think so, show to their 'inferiors'—to servants, manual laborers, 'day' men and women, and I was going to say, to the poor. *There are no more classes in the U.S.S.R., that is understood. But there are poor.* (Italics by E.L.R.). There are many; by far too many." (Pages 64-65). (Gide's note concerning servants in the land of Soviet socialism: "And in reflection to this, what servility, what obsequiousness shown by servants—those in the hotels often give proof to perfect dignity, remaining quite cordial,—who have to deal with directors, with 'responsibles'.") (Page 65).

"Add to this that philanthropy, not even simple charity, is no longer in fashion."

Gide is convinced that the petty-bourgeois spirit that is spreading over Russia is deeply and basically counter-revolutionary. "But what is called 'counter-revolutionary' in the U.S.S.R. today is not at all counter-revolutionary. It is almost the opposite. The spirit considered 'counter-revolutionary' today is the revolutionary spirit, the same ferment, that burst the half-rotten clapboards of the old Tsarist world . . . I suspect that in no country in the world today, unless in Hitler's Germany, is the mind less free, more bowed, more fearful (terrorized), more vasalized." (Page 67).

### Chapter IV

Near Soukhoum he is shown a model oil refinery. He is somewhat saddened when he finds in the wall newspaper in the refinery no mention of the current struggle in Spain. His illustrious guides are peeved by his question and assure him something will be done about it. At the consequent banquet the same evening, Gide's companion, Joseph Last, offers a toast to the Spanish Red Front—after other causes and various personalities have thus been honored. The merry company is



abashed. As if in retort, a toast is offered to Stalin. "I, in my turn, raise my glass to the political prisoners in Germany, Yugoslavia and Hungary. The company applauds, now with open enthusiasm. Then again, immediately after, comes a toast to Stalin. They knew what attitude they had to take in regards to the victims of fascism in Germany and elsewhere. But concerning the trouble and struggle in Spain, general opinion still awaited directions from the *Pravda*, which had not yet said anything. 'No one dared to take a chance before he knew what he was supposed to think.'" (Pages 69-70).

Portraits and busts of Stalin everywhere, "in spots, no doubt, where formerly icons used to hang. Adoration, love, or fear, I do not know; he is always and everywhere there." (Page 71).

"On the route from Tiflis to Batum, we passed Gori, the small town where Stalin was born. I thought it would, without doubt, be courteous to send him a message in reply to the reception we have received in the U.S.S.R., where we were everywhere acclaimed, feted and made much about. I thought I would never find a better occasion. I asked to have the auto stop near a post office and held out the text of my telegram, which ran as follows: 'Passing Gori, in the course of our marvelous trip, I feel the cordial need of addressing you . . .' But here the translator stopped me. I could not talk that way. 'You' was not enough when 'you' referred to Stalin. It was not proper. Something else had to be added. As I showed that I did not understand, my entourage held a consultation. The following was then proposed to me: 'You, leader of the workers,' or 'teacher of the nations' or something else like that. (It sounds as if I were inventing, isn't that so? No, alas! And do not let anybody try to tell me that I was dealing here with the awkward stupidity of some zealous subalterns. The persons who took part in the discussion were highly placed and, at any rate, were well acquainted with 'usage'.) I found the suggested qualifications absurd, and protested that Stalin was above such nonsense. But I argued in vain. Nothing can be done about it. My telegram would not be sent unless I consented to the addition." (Page 71-72). Gide remarks that he gave in, and thought that such ceremony tends to create a frightful distance between Stalin and the people. He declares that since all his speeches and statements were thus touched up, he does not wish to consider himself the author of any text of his that appeared in Russia during his voyage.

Gide speaks (in jest?) of the wisdom shown by Stalin when he established the first and second five-year plans. "If it is not Stalin, then it is man, the human being, who deceives. Is all that was sought by the people, wished for and believed to be within reach, after such great struggles so much blood, so many tears, really 'beyond human efforts'? Is it necessary to wait still longer, is it necessary to continue to be resigned, to put back farther and farther the realization of everybody's hopes? This is what the people of the U.S.S.R. ask, with anguish . . . And after so many years of effort, one has the right to ask: Will they be able to raise their heads again? For never have heads been bowed so low." (Page 73-74).

Gide muses vaguely about the "restoration of the family, private property, the right of inheritance." Are these measures dictated by the fear of Germany? Must the Soviet citizen be given something personal to defend? Gide is afraid that the progressive augmentation of these modifications cannot be stopped; even now the excuses are being forgotten.

"Another common fear is that of 'trotskism' and what is called there the spirit of *counter-revolution*. Today the spirit of submission, of conformity is insisted on. 'Trotskyists' are all those

who are not satisfied. So that people ask if Lenin himself came back to earth today . . ." (Page 76). "Saying Stalin is always right means to say that Stalin overpowers everybody else." (Page 76).

"We were promised the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. We are far from it. Yes, it is evident we have here a dictatorship, but that by one man, not by the united proletarians, not by the soviets. We must not be deceived. It is most important to state in plain words: 'That is not what we wanted.' Another stop and we shall say: 'That is exactly what was not wanted.'" (Pages 76-77).

"The suppression of opposition in a State, or simply stopping opposition from expressing itself, is an extremely grave matter. It is an invitation to terrorism . . . It is without doubt best that Stalin is not successful in this (suppression of opposition)." (Page 77).

### Chapter V

Gide notes that before going to the U.S.S.R. he wrote that the value of a writer is bound up with the revolutionary force animating him, that it is bound up with his force of opposition. All great writers had this force of opposition. On the other hand, Shakespeare and Sophocles lived and wrote "in sympathy with the whole people" (quoting John Addington Symonds). Gide recounts his conversation with a famous Soviet artist who condemns Shostakovich and assures Gide that people in Russia want opera containing airs which they can whistle when they leave the opera house. In reply, Gide refers to the deadening influence of conformism in art. "You will force all artists to conform, and the best, who will refuse to degrade their art, will be reduced to silence. The culture which you claim to serve, to illustrate and to defend will shame you." The Soviet interlocutor retorts that Gide is thus reasoning like a bourgeois.

"He (the Soviet artist) talked loud and louder. He seemed to be reciting a lesson. All of this took place in the lobby of the hotel at Sochi. I left him without answering. But a few minutes later, he came to my room, and this time, in a whisper, said: 'Oh, damn, I know. But over there, they were listening to us—my show is opening up very soon.' X was a painter, and was going to present to the public his latest canvasses." (Page 83).

Concerning *formalism*—quite an issue in the Soviet literary and art circles—Gide writes:

"I tried to understand what was meant by the word, and this is what I think it means. Guilty of formalism is an artist who appears to lean more toward *form* than *content*. Let me add that here *content* is not considered worthy of interest—or to be more precise, is not tolerated—when it tends in a certain direction . . . I confess I cannot write the words 'form' and 'content' without smiling. But it would be more fitting to weep at seeing criticism determined by so absurd a distinction. This may be politically useful, but do not talk here of culture. Culture is in peril as soon as criticism is not freely exercised." (Page 84).

"No matter how beautiful is a work of art, it is disgraced in the U.S.S.R. if it is not in the line. They say that beauty is a bourgeois value . . . What is demanded of an artist or writer is that he conform; everything else is superficial." (Page 84-85).

"In my youth," said X to me, "we were recommended certain books and were warned against reading others; and naturally it was to the latter kind that our attention was drawn. The great difference today is that the young read only the books that are recommended to them and do not even have the desire to read the other books." (Page 85-86).

And Gide's rather dangerous conclusion:

"And since it always happens that we recognize the value of certain advantages only after we have lost them, there is nothing



like a stay in the U.S.S.R. (or in Germany, of course) to help us appreciate the inappreciable liberty of thought we still enjoy in France, and which we sometimes abuse." (Page 86).

Gide quotes a part of the lecture he was going to deliver in Leningrad before an assembly of students and literary folk. He tells that he showed a copy of his talk to X and Y and was given to understand by them that what he had to say was not according to the line and would only cause general discomfort. Gide, therefore, did not deliver the planned talk. In it, Gide remarks that people in general do not applaud the new ideas or new forms found in a work of literature; they tend to applaud the known, the banal. Conformism, he says, is poison to real art. Walt Whitman could not have written his beautiful ode on Lincoln's death if he had been ordered to do so by the State authorities.

### Chapter VI

In Sevastopol, the last stop in his itinerary. Gide likes Sevastopol because there he, somehow, gets the opportunity to see Russian society in a less select, less staged form than it was shown to him at Sochi and Soukhoum (the first, the resort for the privileged "workers;" the second, the model oil refinery). He again gives expression to his feelings of sympathy for the Russian people.

"And already an unknown anguish begins to oppress me. What shall I say when I return to Paris? How shall I answer the questions I anticipate? I shall without doubt be expected to pass judgments, all of one piece. How shall I be able to explain that in the U.S.S.R. I felt now hot and now cold morally. If I were to restate my love, should I have to hide my qualifications, and therefore lie by approving everything? No, I believe that if I acted that way, I should be guilty of a disservice to the U.S.S.R. and the cause it represents in our eyes. But it would be a very grave error to connect too closely one to the other, lest the cause we have in mind is held responsible for what we now deplore in the U.S.S.R." (Page 92).

In the last but one paragraph of the book, Gide declares that he is happy to hear that Russia is reported to be at last taking the side of democratic Spain. (*E. L. R.*: While sending in increased quantities iron ore, tank parts, coal, wheat, potatoes, oil to Italy, which relays the same commodities to Franco, and while sending manganese ore to Germany to produce up-to-date mechanical toys for Franco.)

### Gide's Appendix and Reviewer's Comment

It is quite evident that the book planned by Gide when he started out on his trip to Russia was not going to include ideas like those contained in Chapters III, IV, V and VI. The initial classical allusion may have been cast to introduce a compilation of beautifully rolling notes and speeches on the beauty and heroism of the Russian soul, somewhat similar to the notes and speeches found in the rather scrambled appendix. One has the feeling that the publishers have insisted on getting enough material to produce a regulation size volume, and Gide was obliged to send on to them the truncated texts of some speeches he delivered in the U.S.S.R. and rather innocuous notes on *Bolshevo*, the besprizorny, the anti-religious museums and a kolkhoz run for tourists.

The show at Bolshevo, a model prison where repentant and "reformed" criminals confess their past and their conversion before visitors, reminds Gide of a revival meeting and makes him wonder at the malleability of the Russian soul. He reflects, in the manner of all slummers, on the besprizorny, whom he finds to be numerous in Sevastopol. He muses over a tiny waif sleeping hidden in a sheltered hole of the portico rising in the shadow of the great statue of Savior Lenin. He is present at a besprizorny raid. He wonders why the unfortunate children persist in avoiding the State

reform institutions. He forgets to ask why the besprizorny continue to exist in the U.S.S.R.

The Gides and their kind—wielders of the pen, brush, and microphone constitute a force that is effective in holding the propertyless of the earth spellbound by bourgeois ideas and keeping the propertyless from the understanding that is an unavoidable condition of their emancipation. This influence is at times most effective when it presents itself under the guise of "communism." But in his *Return* the 67-year old man dares to question the same claims and appearances that the red-hot revolutionary Trotskyites and members of other communist splinter groups have never dared to question. The latter continue to dull their minds with the formulae of the "bureaucratic degeneration" or strategic mistakes of a Workers' State and with the fable of Bad Wolf Stalin who is making one meal of Old Grandmother Russian Revolution and Little Red Riding Hood World Revolution. But spry old Gide steals out of his Soviet Eden at Sinop, built and functioning in the name of the Russian toilers, for the benefit of parasites, and goes slumming on the other side of the delimiting river, to see how the little brothers of the high-ranking guests of Hotel Sinop, to whose comfort they minister, fare in their shanty homes, on a Soviet wage slave's seventy-five roubles a month.

Indeed, he speaks in places of the unavoidability of the arrangement. The epitome of the current stupidity of the communistoid intellectual and the stupidity of the muddled host of "genuine" Bolshevik-Leninists who look back to the years 1918-1923 as to the golden age of the communist movement, is contained in Gide's pitiable: "There are no classes in the U.S.S.R., of course. But there are poor. Too many, by far too many. I hoped not to see them. In fact, it is in order not to see them that I came to the U.S.S.R." No classes, but poor and well-fixed, rulers and ruled.

But we should not expect social understanding and clarity from Gide. He says he does not understand social and economic questions, but is affected by their "psychological by-products." It is enough that he suspects things. He dares to say that he is puzzled by the anomaly between the official claims and reality in the Soviet social structure.

His book should therefore exert immediately a deep influence on two categories of readers. First, the novelists, artists, "social-viewpoint" experts and the rest of the company now toying with the hodge-podge of caesarism and kautskyism now passing under the name of communism. Second, the "genuine" Bolshevik-Leninists-Trotskyites, who up to date have played the role of Job, cleaving to the myth of the existence of a proletarian dictatorship in Russia, though reality offered them the evidence of the Russian workers' wage slavery and the total absence of proletarian rule in the so-called Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Gide says: "No classes, but poor, by far too many poor." Gide says: "Yes, it is evident that we have here a dictatorship . . . but not by the united proletarians. We must not be deceived. It is most important to state in plain words: 'That is not what we wanted!'" Gide says: "It would be a very grave error to connect too closely one (the cause of socialism) to the other (the historic fate of the U.S.S.R.) lest the cause we have in mind is held responsible for what we now deplore in the U.S.S.R." We must not be deceived.

## VANGUARD

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# PROGRESSIVE REVOLUTION

• Jonathan Ayres

(This is a continuation of SOVIET SOCIALISM—SOVIET CAPITALISM, which appeared in the November 1936 issue of INTERNATIONAL.)

THE GENERAL problem—the social-economic nature of the Soviet Union and the direction of its development—swims in the historic reality of our time. We shall get closest to the conditions of the problem and therefore to a solution when we notice: 1. That the historic reality of our time is not that of pure capitalism. Of about two billion inhabitants only 800 millions live under the rule of the capitalist nations, while more than a billion still live under social conditions whose configuration is mainly pre-capitalist. That is, the population of the earth is not composed only of wage workers, investors, and their guests and parasites. Nestling inside all developed countries are artisans, peasants, independent farmers, backwoodsmen—people who do not all, or only in part, earn their livelihood by working for wages, or investing in capitalist enterprises, or getting “hand-outs” from one or the other class. There are, furthermore, countries and continents where the predominant social structure is not that of capitalism but that of the two pre-capitalist forms of economy: 1. Natural economy, in which exchange is of minor importance and goods are produced mostly for the use of the producers and their kin, and 2. Simple merchant economy, marked by the production of goods for sale in the local and regional markets by the producers themselves.

The history of capitalism, from the time of its rise as mercantile capital in the midst of decomposing European feudalism up to its present imperialist role on the world scene has been an epic of implacable war against these earlier economic modes, whether their social structure was that of tribal and clan communism, slavery, feudalism, peasant patriarchal holdings or artisan artels.

Because capitalism can only function as such in the arena of the market, it first destroys all forms of natural economy and institutes markets where there were none before. The native producers now exchange their products for the commodities of modern industry or for goods made by their fellows. Then modern industry, by means of ruthless competition, aided by pacific or violent political measures, drives the artisan-made commodities off the market and replaces them with its own cheaper products. When the new demand is great enough, or even before, capital immigrates to the backward region in the form of credit or direct investment. Modern industry is installed to serve the developed market.

This process of transformation gives rise in the backward regions of the earth to strange hybrid social forms, in which modern wage slavery mixes with preceding methods of exploitation. The tendency is for the backward social structures to be completely destroyed and for their people to be drawn entirely into the capitalist social scheme. They become wage workers, living by the sale of their labor power, or investors, living on profit, or servants and parasites, surviving or thriving, on the tribute or charity of either class.

In the backward districts abroad and among the economically backward social layers at home, capitalist production acquires much of its raw material. There it recruits new labor forces to man its expanding enterprise. There capitalist industry finds the demand that realizes in money a considerable portion of the means of consumption and even means of production that it cannot sell

to its wage workers and its entrepreneur class. The conquest of the pre-capitalist social structures by capitalist industry serves to hold back the fall of the rate of profit—the deadly threat held at the throat of capitalism:

Exchange of capitalist industry with backward districts makes possible the diminution of the prices of raw material (constant capital), which is cheaper there. It lowers the value of labor-power (variable capital) at home, since the same real wage can be expressed through a smaller nominal wage, as a result of export foodstuffs from the backward districts. It enables capitalist industry to enter in competition with simple merchant (artisan) production and thus realize prices that are greater than the value of the products sold by it—that is, *differential profits, sur-profits*. Furthermore, the export of capital to the developing backward regions increase the total mass of surplus-value by attracting, to the capital thus invested, in the form of interests and dividend, values produced outside of the system. When capital enters new branches, it generally begins with a very low organic composition. These new industries bring a greater surplus-value, in relation to the value of the constant capital employed in them.

As you see, the conquest of the pre-capitalist sections of the earth by capitalism takes place in pursuance of the basic aim of capitalist production: the utilization of capital, that is, the increase of the value advanced by the capitalist through the appropriation of the labor of others. But this itself is only the contemporary historical expression of the human quest for greater economy of effort in production.

Man's will to live and live better expresses itself through his activity in the production and reproduction of life. Man's manner of making the things he needs changes as he incessantly seeks to attain a greater economy of effort in the production of the necessities of life. The tendency, therefore, is for the “cheaper,” more economical, mode of production to conquer and replace the rest. Thus, in the world arena, production for the market is superior, that is more economical of effort, than the method of natural economy, the production of use-values for the satisfaction of the needs of the producer himself. Therefore, production for the market tends to destroy and take the place of all forms of natural economy. Modern capitalist production is more economical than simple merchant production, and it routs and displaces the latter. So that while the history of man is the record of class struggles, it is at the same time the record of struggling forms of economy, with modern industry finally routing and displacing all previous modes of production, and then itself coming face to face with an impasse created by its own contradictions.

This tendency works its way through the social and physical circumstances it finds at hand. It is itself conditioned by these circumstances. That is, it is deflected by some, and carried forward by others. The most important circumstances that condition the tendency to economic changes are geographic location, climate, natural resources; social, political and religious traditions; existing social, political and economic institutions; popular ideals, belief and class ambitions.

In its victorious attack on the two earlier economic modes, capital has resorted to aids and modes of procedure that have varied with the historic and geographic differences of the pre-capitalist social structures attacked.

During the six centuries of its existence (beginning with the first appearance of merchant capital in the midst of European feudalism), the process of capital accumulation was served directly and indirectly by the following social acts:

1. The extension of the market through the separation of the peasant house industries from agriculture proper.
2. The exten-



sion of the use of money. 3. Exploration and colonization. The appropriation by the capitalists or their political agent, the State, of natural resources owned in common by primitive social structures. 4. Wars for political and religious emancipation. 5. State loans. 6. Political and economic philosophy of laissez-faire, which was only the rationalization of the need of sweeping aside the traditions and institutions that stood in the way of capitalism at a certain stage of its development. 7. The great democratic revolutions of the 19th century. 8. The so-called industrial revolution; the technological development of modern industry. 9. Universal education, offering a training for the diversified needs of the modern economic process and stimulating a demand for the commodities of capitalist industry. 10. Already before the second half of the 19th century, European capital began to make use of a new avenue of accumulation: the export of capital or investment in the backward countries. 11. The "white man's burden" became a more resounding ideal when, with the increase of the number of national rivals on the world market, free trade gave way to protectionism—each national capital striving to keep its own strip of the world market for the accumulation needs of its own industries. The system of protective tariffs shut off every industrial country from all others and thus artificially increased home production. "The daily increasing speed, with which production may today be intensified on all fields of great industry is offset on the other hand by the increased slowness with which the markets for these increased products expand. What the great industries turn out in a few months can scarcely be absorbed by the markets in years. . . . The results are a chronic over-production, depressed prices, falling or disappearing profits; in short, the long cherished freedom of competition has reached the end of its tether and is compelled to announce its own palpable bankruptcy. . . . The great captains of industry of a certain line meet for the joint regulation of production by means of a cartel." (Engels' note, *Capital*, page 518, Volume III, Kerr ed.). 12. The greater competition resulting from the restriction of the opportunities for capital accumulation is adjusted through the centralization of capital, the reorganization of industry on the basis of larger and more economical units: "monopoly capitalism." 13. With working capital centralized in huge blocks, banking concerns cease being mere intermediaries, that is, agencies in the gathering of money for investment in production. They become Hilferding's "financial oligarchy," sharing in or dominating the control of production. 14. Under certain circumstances, especially those of economic and social collapse, reproduction and capital accumulation can only be continued and advanced when the State intervenes in the economic process. This may take the form of attempts on the part of the State to do away with the disproportion existing in the different fields of the national production, to smooth out intra-national competition, to adjust labor and capitalist disputes over wages and labor time and to regulate the prices of commodities and the rates of profit pocketed in the various branches of the national industry. It may take the shape of State credits to industry, and resulting enforced cartelization and part ownership of industry by the State. It may take the form of the complete seizure of certain branches of production by the State or the development of new industrial units by the State acting as entrepreneur. The State becomes the owner of the industry. Since, according to the famous Marxist John Strachey, "by this word capitalism, we mean an economic system under which the fields, factories and mines are owned by individuals and groups of individuals," there is the danger that some readers might say, now that we have reached the case of complete State ownership: "Here capitalism leaves by the window." What Marxist Strachey does

not see is that the capitalist ownership does not need to be symbolized by title deeds of personal possession of means of production. This latter kind of capitalist ownership belongs specifically to a relatively early period of capitalism. In the State owned industries—capitalist ownership—capitalist appropriation is expressed through the medium of the "private" (individual) ownership of government bonds and the payment of "wages of superintendence"—high salaries and bonuses—to directors.

It is evident that State intervention in industry, and to a much greater extent, total State ownership of industry or nationalization, is an instrument for the rapidly developing concentration and centralization process of capitalism. It has the aim of aiding the national industry in the world market. We may therefore expect the nationalization of economic life to become more extensive as the international struggle becomes even sharper than it is today, as the conditions of accumulation become more difficult, as capitalist expansion in the world comes near its physical limits. Nationalization, fusing the State with the organizations of the capitalist class, serves as a natural and useful mask for imperilled capitalism.

However, while it is true that there is an increasing tendency for the State to assume the role of an industrial entrepreneur in countries with a developed capitalism, and while it is probable that the next epoch of capitalism will be an epoch of "State capitalism," it is quite evident that the tendency to nationalization is especially marked in the "new" countries just "awakening" to the possibilities of capitalist development. Already conquered in part by capitalist production, backward countries awake, they become conscious of the world market. The rather imperfect capitalist emancipation of the backward districts of the world—their emancipation from the traditional social and political forms that, belonging to pre-capitalist production relations, stand in the way of capitalist development—were accomplished in the 19th century under the hegemony of the dominating imperialist powers, as India under that of Great Britain. The "awakened" country will in time want to throw off this control. The interests of the rising native investor class, when the latter becomes numerous enough, will in time clash with the interests of the dominating imperialist power. The capitalist emancipation of a backward country, may be started through a war, as in the South Africa of 1900, and Ethiopia of 1935. It may be advanced through internal political and social revolutions followed by national defensive wars, as in Russia, Japan, China, Kemalist Turkey and Fascist Italy. In such countries, the new State is an interested party, keen to serve the ambitions of the rising national entrepreneur class. Often the State, armed with all its instruments of compulsion and social co-ordination, becomes a partner in the national industry, as in Fascist Italy, Poland, Persia, or it becomes the exclusive national entrepreneur as in the U.S.R.R. and Turkey.

The danger, indicated above, is that the "awakened" country will be robbed of its political independence by the powers crusading in the world arena in behalf of their national capitals. Because the powers are the agents of their national capitals, and serve first of all the interests of their national investor class, they bar the way to a thorough modernization of the "new" countries. That is the troubled story of contemporary China. That was the story of Turkey. That was the story of Russia. It is only through the direct ownership and control of production by the national State that the economy of the "new" countries can be developed on the basis of modern industry and the political independence of the country safeguarded. Therefore the beginning of the modernization of a country is not only coupled with a



movement for national liberation. It is usually also coupled with an idealized movement for the State control and nationalization of production.

Social ideals, political theories, group ambitions that have taken possession of the mind of the population, all figuring strongly in the thought of the advanced section of the population, are in themselves important driving forces that serve to advance or thwart the movement of the economic process.

Forms of natural economy were destroyed and replaced with the production for the market—in the name of human freedom. In the name of civilization, progress, national unification, national independence, patriotism, socialism, the classless society, a "bet-tered by Ataturk (Kemal Pasha) is aiding the national economic de-give way to modern industry.

The capitalist emancipation of Japan was launched with the blessings of the religious-political head of the nation. It was directly instigated by a politically advanced set of nobles with mercantile interests, who mixed adroitly their own ambitions with the historic needs of the nation. They reasoned that Japan must be modernized if it was to preserve its political independence. The capitalist emancipation of Japan required the political unification of the country. It required the suppression of the outworn feudal institutions that stood in the way of progress. It was accompanied by definite changes in dress, customs, thought which necessarily come with the introduction of modern industry.

Italian fascism continues the work of Cavour and Garibaldi. It swept away the vestiges of regionalism. It united the nation in behalf of the needs of a modernized economic process. Roads were built to bring peasant communities within reach of modern industry. Schools were established, to educate the population to a demand for the new products and in order to fit it occupationally for the modern economic process. Through the direct intervention of the Fascist State, in the name of a unified and great Italy, the preponderant backward social structures of the country are being destroyed to feed the needs of accumulation and expansion of growing Italian industry. Italian fascism is the instrument of the continued capitalist emancipation of Italy.

Taking its cue from Lenin and Stalin, the single State party led by Ataturk (Kemal Pasha) is aiding the national economic development of Turkey by means of a five year plan. It is industrializing the country, and is at the same time keeping the country from being grabbed by foreign capitalists, in the name of great, strong—and yea, socialist—Turkey. The important industries of Turkey have been nationalized. Exports and imports are under the direct control of the one-party government. New branches of industry are being built. As in Soviet Russia, and Fascist Italy, it is criminal for the workers in the nationalized industries to strike. As in Russia, the slogan that the Turkish State entrepreneur sports on public buildings and in public conveniences is "We are marching to a classless society!" (And the Soviet economists do not classify the Turkish government as a "capitalist state," but something that is neither proletarian nor capitalist. That is, they show as little "doctrinaire dogmatism" toward their Turkish friends as is shown by Trotsky toward that social structure he recognizes as being neither "socialist nor capitalist.")

The promise of instituting socialism, to solve all the ills of the country, has become a powerful instrument for the capitalist emancipation of a backward country.

"In this process revolution is necessary in order to shatter the outworn State forms dating from epochs of natural economy and simple merchant production, and in order to create modern States conforming to the exigencies of capitalist production. These re-

volution, notably the Russian and Chinese, shows, alongside of the immediate objective of advancing capitalism, certain obsolete pre-capitalist atagonism (as peasant vs. the State industrial and commercial entrepreneur in Russia, *ed.*), as well as distinctly new political contradictions that already seem to menace capitalist domination. It is this mixture of motives that determines the depth and powerful enthusiasm of these movements, and at the same time hampers and retards their victorious course" (*Accumulation of Capital*).

The progressive revolutions of the 20th century, occurring in a late epoch of capitalism, "talk" socialism, some hesitantly, others very loud. Just as in the eighteenth and later in the nineteenth century, the French and German artisans and workers were encouraged by the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity to sacrifice limb and life in the historic task of clearing the way politically for the fuller development of capitalism—so in the 20th century the promise of the immediate establishment of socialism in a backward country enlists the politically advanced intellectuals and workers in the service of the delayed capitalist emancipation of their native land.

Marxism (I am not referring here to Strachey and the Webb ménage) bases the historic program of the socialist revolution on the dynamics of the forces of production. Marx wrote: "The development of the productive forces is practically the first absolutely necessary condition (of communism—you can well understand that Marx, not heading a "socialist" State business concern, did not find it necessary to play with the two interchangeable terms in the manner of the well-known Leninist folderol, *ed.*) Without it (the development of the productive forces) we should have only the socialization of poverty, and poverty would have to recommence the struggle for necessities and as a result resuscitate the old rubbish (the capitalist relations)." And he explains exactly what he means—expressing his thought so clearly that even Strachey will not be able to twist his meaning—in his article "Moralisierende Kritik," *Literary Legacy*, vol. II, pp. 512-513, written in November 1847:

"If it is true that the bourgeoisie 'maintains its injustice of property relations' (an expression used by Heinzer) politically, that is by means of its State power. It is no less true that it does not create them. The origin of the injustice of property relations is in now way due to the *political* domination of the bourgeois classes. On the contrary, it is the domination of the bourgeoisie that flows from the existing production relations. . . . For this reason, if the proletariat overthrows the political domination of the bourgeoisie (in a country whose productive forces are below the highest level of existing capitalism), the victory will be a point in the process of the bourgeois revolution itself and will serve the purpose of the latter by aiding its ulterior development, just as it did in 1794 and will again as long as the 'movement' of history has not developed the material factors creating the necessity of putting an end to the bourgeois mode of production and in consequence to the political domination of the bourgeoisie."

That is, in the first place, capitalism is not abolished merely because you acquire political power and call yourselves a "Workers' State." Capitalism is abolished in the measure that you do away with the historically definite production relation that is distinctive of capitalism. And "it is always the direct relation of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden foundation, of the entire social construction, and with it of the political form of the relations between sovereignty and dependance, in short, of the corresponding form of the State" (*Capital*, vol. III, Chap. 47, p. 919, Kerr *ed.*).



In the second place, a revolution that is styled as a proletarian revolution, (and even a socialist revolution) by its shrewdest publicists will be nevertheless a progressive revolution of capitalist emancipation if the reality of the existing historic conditions so ordains.

These are the two points that I should like to develop in the next chapter, in which I shall indicate and illustrate the essential features of the social-economic system we call capitalism and contrast the latter with the unavoidable features of a system of society that is free from the capitalist social-economic relation, to which, before the Webbs and Stracheys started to improve on Marx and Engels, we used to attribute interchangeably the terms socialism and communism.

The idealist builders of "socialism" in an isolated backward region make a clean sweep of the old, outworn institutions standing in the way of economic progress. Under the bludgeon blows of Bolshevism there is being forged in Russia an industrial and social co-ordination that would have taken old-fashioned bourgeois development decades to complete. On the other hand, the very fervor and earnestness of the revolutionists makes for acts that place difficulties in the path of capital accumulation in the emancipated country. Because its power flows from a contradictory set of motives, a deep-plowing progressive (bourgeois) revolution usually brings internal disorganization. For some time the affected country may be subtracted entirely or in part from the international trade arena. But the pull of the world market is too strong to be withstood for long. The very industrial development for which the revolution was accomplished depends on knitting a closer relationship between the revolutionary country and the rest of the world. Gradually suitable political and social adjustments are made at home and in the field of international relations. The hopeful capitalist youngster, still toggled out in revolutionary raiment, reintroduces himself to the fellowship of capitalist exchange. The architects of "socialism in one country" revise their early programs and rid themselves of their earnestness. They discover that the terms "socialism" and "socialist" are even more efficacious means of social bamboozle than the old patriotic slogans. It is in fact much easier to have a wage worker confuse his interests with the interests of the "socialist fatherland" than it was to have him forget his misery in the cause of the Tsar and Holy Russia.

(Mr. Ayres' essay will be continued in the February issue.)

## MARTOV'S LOST WORKS

UNDER the title of *State and Socialist Revolution* we shall publish serially, beginning in the February issue, the first English version of the complete works by Martov dealing with a problem we consider to be of utmost importance to the world labor movement.

Who is Martov? He is the Russian Marxist whose personality and political ideas are so gracefully avoided in Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*. There are people who speak of Plekhanov and Martov as the two great names of Russian Marxist thought. When we hear this epithet applied to Martov, who died in 1924 a tubercular, poverty-stricken exile, we can not help but think of Lenin, the successful practical statesman who lies embalmed under the magnificent modernistic mausoleum in the Red Square, in whose name the Russian workers are made to sweat copiously and cheerfully, whose words are used to convince the Russian proletariat that the system of wage labor is socialism, whose writings are edited, marcel-waved and re-

edited for hundreds of subsidized publishing houses all over the world, whose sayings and supposed sayings are the subject of exegesis by thousands of candidates for the degree of doctor of philosophy, whom grave spectacled Fabian professors in London and Moscow avow to be the Jesus to whom Marx was but an annunciatory John the Baptist.

Martov, the clear and honest thinking social scientist, was not a successful politician, either dead or alive. He evaluated the Russian situation, he saw what lay ahead and said so, placing himself in the position of a helpless Jeremiah. He recognized the Russian Revolution to be a peasant revolution, having a petty-bourgeois character, "directed by the proletariat and impregnated with the utopism typical of a backward proletariat." He said that the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party was not to be confused with the dictatorship of the working class. He foresaw that the world-revolutionary pretensions of the Bolsheviks were a sort of unconscious protective camouflage that would in time give way to the rationalization offered by a program of "national socialism."

Yet he emphasized that the Bolshevik dictatorship of 1918-1919 was a revolutionary dictatorship, brought to power by the toiling masses of the country and that the Communist Party of that time, embodying that dictatorship, was joined psychologically and socially to the Russian and the international proletariat. The man who predicted that Lenin would beget Stalin, opposed in his day any attempt to overthrow the Bolshevik dictatorship. During the Civil War he mobilized his adherents for the Red Army to fight against Denikin, Wrangel and their interventionist backers. By the end of 1920 the power of the popular representative bodies (the Soviets) of Revolutionary Russia had so far been replaced by the rule of the Communist Party that there was no place in the country for a person like Martov. But even during his exile he carried on indefatigable propaganda against the economic blockade thrown around Russia, for the diplomatic recognition of the Bolshevik government by Western States, for credits and the development of commercial relations between Soviet Russia and the rest of the world.

"Power for what?" he asked. It is possibly as a result of this intransigent loyalty to historic reality that there are no Martov corners in pious peasants' huts, no Martov ikons, no Martov mausoleum, no huge statues of Martov topping resplendent O.G. P.U. office buildings, no Marx-Engels-Martov-Stalin Institutes, no Martovist trends in verse and in bohemian tea-houses, no Martovist art criticism, no Martovist realism, surrealism and sub-realism, and no Marxism-Martovism. He expected the workers themselves to accomplish their emancipation. He believed that with historic experience they would undergo a political and moral development that would enable them to overcome current utopias and current swindles in political practice and theory. He left us, among other writings, these carefully thought out discussions, dedicated to the increase and development of the "revolutionary consciousness" of the working class of the world.

The essays that will appear in the *International Review* were written in 1918 and 1919. But they do not limit themselves in scope and interest to the period of the Russian Revolution. Their significance is greater today than ever. They may be said to do for the Russian Revolution what Marx's *Civil War in France* did for the Paris Commune. As such, the discussions gathered under the title of *State and Socialist Revolution* are the perfect antidote to the "Leninist" confusion, which has added so many minds since 1918. In 1937, nearly two decades after the February and October revolutions, Martov indicates and makes clear



the lesson that history has taught us so insistently but which labor politicians and addicts to fashionable wish thinking find hard to understand.

The following of Martov's works will be published serially in *The International Review*:

I. The Ideology of "Sovietism."

1. The Mysticism of the Soviet Regime.
2. Dictatorship of the Minority?
3. Dictatorship over the Proletariat?
4. Metaphysical Materialism and Dialectical Materialism.

II. The Conquest of the State.

1. Marx and the State.
2. The Commune of 1871.
3. Marx and the Commune.

III. Marx and the Problem of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

## REFORM OR REVOLUTION

• Rosa Luxemburg

*The concluding installment of the first complete English translation of this classic will appear in the February issue.*

### COLLAPSE

BERNSTEIN began his revision of the Social-Democracy by abandoning the theory of capitalist collapse. The latter, however, is the corner-stone of scientific socialism. Rejecting it, Bernstein rejects the whole doctrine of socialism. In the course of his discussion, he abandons one after another of the positions of socialism in order to be able to maintain his first affirmation.

Without the collapse of capitalism the expropriation of the capitalist class is impossible. Bernstein therefore renounces expropriation and chooses a progressive realization of the "co-operative principle" as the aim of the labor movement.

But cooperation can not be realized within capitalist production. Bernstein, therefore, renounces the socialization of production, and merely proposes to reform commerce and to develop consumers' cooperatives.

But the transformation of society through consumers' cooperatives, even by means of trade unions, is incompatible with the real material development of capitalist society. Therefore, Bernstein abandons the materialist conception of history.

But his conception of the march of economic development is incompatible with the Marxist theory of surplus-value. Therefore, Bernstein abandons the theory of value and surplus-value and, that way, the whole economic system of Karl Marx.

But the struggle of the proletariat can not be carried on without a given final aim and without an economic base found in the existing society. Bernstein, therefore, abandons the class struggle and speaks of reconciliation with bourgeois liberalism.

But in a class society, the class struggle is a natural and unavoidable phenomenon. Bernstein, therefore, contests even the existence of classes in society. The working class is for him a mass of individuals, divided politically and intellectually, but also economically. And the bourgeoisie, according to him, does not group itself politically in accordance with its inner economic interest but only because of exterior pressure from above and below.

But if there is no economic base for the class struggle and, if, consequently, there are no classes in our society, not only the future, but even the past struggles, of the proletariat against the

bourgeoisie appear to be impossible and the Social-Democracy and its successes seem absolutely incomprehensible, or they can be understood only as the results of political pressure by the government—that is, not as the natural consequences of historic development but as the fortuitous consequences of the policy of the Hohenzollern; not as the legitimate offspring of capitalist society, but as the bastard children of reaction. Rigorously logical, in this respect, Bernstein passes from the materialist conception of history to the outlook of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Vossische Zeitung*.

After rejecting the socialist criticism of capitalist society, it is easy for Bernstein to find the present state of affairs satisfactory—at least in a general way. Bernstein does not hesitate. He discovers that at the present time reaction is not very strong in Germany, that "we cannot speak of political reaction in the countries of Western Europe," and that in all the countries of the West "the attitude of the bourgeois classes toward the socialist movement is at most an attitude of defense but not one of oppression" (*Volwaerts*, 26th of March 1899). Far from becoming worse, the situation of the workers is getting better. Indeed, the bourgeoisie is politically progressive and morally sane. We cannot speak either of reaction or oppression. It is all for the best in the best of all possible worlds. . . .

Bernstein thus travels in logical sequence from A to Z. He began by abandoning the *final aim* and supposedly keeping the movement. But as there can be no socialist movement without a socialist aim, he ends by renouncing the *movement*.

And thus Bernstein's conception of socialism collapses entirely. The proud and admirable symmetric construction of socialist thought becomes for him a pile of rubbish, in which the debris of all systems, the pieces of thought of various great and small minds, find a common resting place. Marx and Proudhon, Leon von Buch and Franz Oppenheimer, Friedrich Albert Lange and Kant, Herr Prokopovitch and Dr. Ritter von Neupauer, Herkner and Schulze-Gaevernitz, Lassalle and Professor Julius Wolff: all contribute something to Bernstein's system. From each he takes a little. There is nothing astonishing about that. For when he abandoned scientific socialism, he lost the axis of intellectual crystallization around which isolated facts group themselves in the organic whole of a coherent conception of the world.

His doctrine, composed of bits of all systems possible, seems upon first consideration, to be completely free from prejudices. For Bernstein does not like talk of "party science," or to be more exact, of class science, any more than he likes to talk of class liberalism or class morality. He thinks he succeeds in expressing human, general, abstract science, abstract liberalism, abstract morality. But since the society of reality is made up of classes, which have diametrically opposed interests, aspirations and conceptions, a general human science in social questions, an abstract liberalism, an abstract morality, are at present illusions, pure utopia. The science, the democracy, the morality, considered by Bernstein as general, human, are merely the dominant science, dominant democracy and dominant morality, that is, bourgeois science, bourgeois democracy, bourgeois morality.

When Bernstein rejects the economic doctrine of Marx in order to swear by the teachings of Brentano, Boehm-Jevons, Say and Julius Wolff, he exchanges the scientific base of the emancipation of the working class for the apologetics of the bourgeoisie. When he speaks of the generally human character of liberalism and transforms socialism into a variety of liberalism, he deprives the socialist movement (in a general fashion) of its class character, and consequently of its historic content, consequently of all content, and conversely, recognizes the class representing liberal-



ism in history, the bourgeoisie, as the champion of the general interests of humanity.

And when he wars against "raising of the material factors to the rank of an all-powerful force of development," when he protests against the so-called "contempt for the ideal" that is supposed to rule the Social-Democracy, when he presumes to talk for idealism, for morals, pronouncing himself at the same time against the only source of the moral rebirth of the proletariat, a revolutionary class struggle,—he does no more than the following: preach to the working class the quintessence of the morality of the bourgeoisie, that is, reconciliation with the existing social order and the transfer of the hopes of the proletariat to the limbo of ethical simulacra.

When he directs his keenest arrows against our dialectic system, he is really attacking the specific mode of thought employed by the conscious proletariat in its struggle for liberation. It is an attempt to break the sword that has helped the proletariat to pierce the darkness of its future. It is an attempt to shatter the intellectual arm with the aid of which the proletariat, though materially under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, is yet enabled to triumph over the bourgeoisie. For it is our dialectical system that shows to the working class the transitory character of this yoke, proving to the workers the inevitability of their victory, and is already realizing a revolution in the domain of thought. Saying goodbye to our system of dialectics and resorting instead to the intellectual see-saw typified by the well known "on one hand—on the other hand," "yes—but," "although—however," "more—less," etc., he quite logically lapses into a mode of thought that belongs historically to the bourgeoisie in decline, being the faithful intellectual reflection of the social existence and political activity of the bourgeoisie at that stage. The political "on one hand—on the other hand," "yes" and "but" of the bourgeoisie of today resembles in a marked degree Bernstein's manner of thinking, which is the sharpest and surest proof of the bourgeois nature of his conception of the world.

But, as it is used by Bernstein, the word "bourgeois" itself is not a class expression but a general social notion. Logical to the end, he has exchanged, together with his science, politics, morals and mode of thinking, the historic language of the proletariat for that of the bourgeoisie. When he uses, without distinction, the term "citizen" in reference to the bourgeois as well as to the proletarian, intending, thereby, to refer to man in general, he identifies man in general with the bourgeois, and human society with bourgeois society.

#### OPPORTUNISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

**B**ERNSTEIN'S book is of great importance to the German and the international labor movement. It is the first attempt to give a theoretic base to the opportunist currents common in the Social-Democracy.

These currents may be said to have existed for a long time in our movement, if we take into consideration such sporadic manifestations of opportunism as the question of subsidization of steamers. But it is only since about 1890, with the suppression of the anti-Socialist laws, that we have had a trend of opportunism of a clearly defined opportunist character. Vollman's "State Socialism," the vote on the Bavarian budget, the "agrarian socialism" of South Germany, Heine's policy of compensation, Schipfel's stand on tariffs and militarism, are the high points in the development of our opportunist practice.

What appears to characterize this practice above all? A certain hostility to "theory." This is quite natural, for our "theory," that is, the principles of scientific socialism, impose clearly marked limitations to practical activity—in so far as it concerns the aims

of this activity, the means used in attaining these aims, and the method employed in this activity. It is quite natural for people who run after immediate, "practical" results to want to free themselves from such limitations and to render their practice independent of our "theory."

However, this outlook is disproved by every attempt to apply it in reality. State socialism, agrarian socialism, the policy of compensation, the question of the army, all constituted defeats to our opportunism. It is clear that, if this current is to maintain itself, it must try to destroy the principles of our theory and elaborate a theory of its own. Bernstein's book is precisely an effort in that direction. That is why at Stuttgart all the opportunist elements in our party immediately grouped themselves about Bernstein's banner. If the opportunist currents in the practical activity of our party are an entirely natural phenomenon which can be explained in light of the special conditions of our activity and its development, Bernstein's theory is no less natural an attempt to group these currents into a general theoretic expression, an attempt to elaborate its own theoretic conditions and to break with scientific socialism. That is why the published expression of Bernstein's ideas should be recognized as a theoretic test for opportunism, and as its first scientific legitimation.

What was the result of this test? We have seen it. Opportunism is not in the position to elaborate a positive theory capable of withstanding criticism. All it can do is to attack various isolated theses of Marxist theory and, just because Marxist doctrine constitutes one solidly constructed edifice, hope to shake the entire system, from the top to its foundations.

This shows that opportunist practice is essentially irreconcilable with Marxism. But it also goes to prove that opportunism is incompatible with socialism (the socialist movement) in general, that its internal tendency is to push the labor movement into bourgeois paths, that opportunism tends to paralyze completely the proletarian class struggle. The latter, considered historically, has evidently nothing to do with Marxist doctrine. For, before Marx and independently from him, there have been labor movements and various socialist doctrines, each of which, in its way, was the theoretic expression, corresponding to the conditions of the time, of the struggle of the working class for emancipation. The theory that consists in basing socialism on the moral notion of justice, on the struggle against the mode of distribution, instead of basing it on the struggle against the mode of production, the conception of class antagonism as an antagonism between poor and the rich, the effort to graft the "corporative principle" on capitalist economy—all the nice notions found in Bernstein's doctrine—already existed before him. And these theories were, in their time, in spite of their insufficiency, effective theories of the proletarian class struggle. They were the children's seven-league boots, thanks to which the proletariat learned to walk on the scene of history.

(concluded in February issue)

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8 mos.: U. S. A. \$1.00; Canada and Foreign \$1.25.